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**Ideology Has No Borders: Why We Need a Containment-Plus Strategy for the
Islamic State**

by

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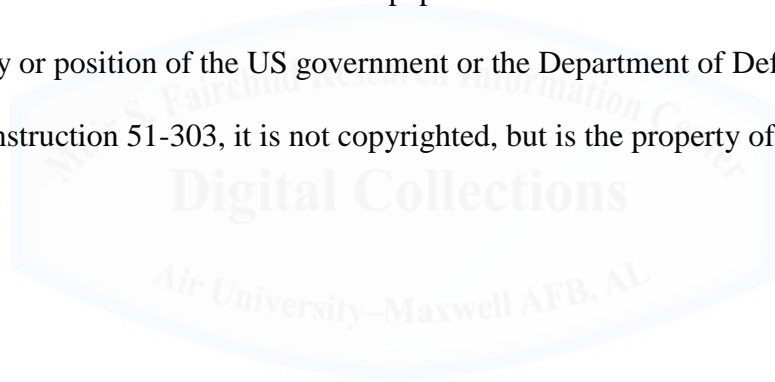
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INTRODUCTION

On September 11, 2001 I was on my third month of active duty. I was working at the Defense Language Institute English Language Center at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. Almost any American can tell you exactly where they were and what they were doing on that day. I remember seeing the footage of the first plane hitting the World Trade Center, then the second, followed by a third hitting the Pentagon. I knew that something was terribly wrong and that my life as a military member, and as an American, was about to drastically change. The United States became determined to find the enemy that caused such a catastrophe. That enemy turned out to be the Islamic extremist, Osama bin Laden and his followers. Once the U.S. had someone [or something] to blame, a phenomenon that we may not have even known was taking place, began to turn the Islamic religion into the perceived enemy.

A few months later I had transferred units and was working in the Air Force's basic military training program. Upon meeting the chaplain of my assigned unit, I learned that he was Muslim. I wasn't sure how I felt about him, because I, too, had somehow begun to think that his religion is the enemy's religion; therefore, he must be bad too. But why? If I could be lead to have such feelings, what were other Americans thinking? My guess is that they were experiencing similar thoughts. Luckily, for me, this chaplain helped me realize that his religion is traditionally a peaceful one and, like all other religions, can have some bad actors.

Fast forward ten years later and I was standing in a two hundred year old classroom at the United States Military Academy at West Point, teaching an international relations course. I had just spent part of the summer with four of my cadets in Israel, where the Israeli Defense Force

escorted us around the country and discussed their training and tactics with us. It was there that I learned what it was like to fight for your very own existence every single day. Israel is surrounded by their enemies, with mere devised borders keeping their sovereignty. It takes a lot of courage and will to overcome the atrocities they have faced for so many years. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, then President of Iran, had been making one of many claims to destroy Israel. Given Israel's geographic location in the Middle East, and if Iran really wanted to make good on its claims, it treated this as a real threat. Later that same year, in 2011, the U.S. was scheduled to withdraw its forces from Iraq. I suggested to my cadets that we [the U.S.] needed to be smart about how we withdrew from Iraq because if Iran was truly serious about attacking Israel, it would try to capitalize on its sphere of influence over the Iraqi population. This would position Iranian support even closer to the Israeli border from Iraq, adding to the support they already have in Syria and the Gaza Strip. At this time I, nor anyone, could not have predicted the rise of the group who calls themselves the Islamic State, also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS). However, if we take a historical look at the region, we could have predicted that there would have been some group, if not ISIS, that would emerge.

During the Cold War, the perceived threat against the U.S. was the Soviet Union and the spread of communism. George Kennan, an American advisor and diplomat, wrote a long telegram to the U.S. Secretary of State, outlining a strategy on how the U.S. should address the Soviet threat. His thoughts were that communism and the Soviet Union must be contained and his telegram provided the foundation for the United States' foreign policy of containment against the Soviets. The U.S. came to believe that the Soviet Union were expansionists and, animated by their faith in communism, were determined to impose their authority on the rest of the world.¹

These thoughts started a chain reaction that would last for four decades, as the U.S. would try to prevent communism from spreading into Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America.

Communism is based on a Marxist-Leninism political ideology that is anti-capitalist.² It is a competing ideology to U.S. democracy. Ideology essentially drives national security strategies and strategy influences policy. The containment policy towards communism became an ‘us versus them’ mentality. But, if we had really stopped to consider communism as a belief, we would have realized that no matter how much military force we applied to fighting against it, we could not destroy it. If we were to conceptualize ISIS in the same way that Kennan did the Soviets, there are striking similarities and it appears that the U.S. has also taken a containment policy towards fighting against ISIS. However, the Islamic State is another ideology that cannot be destroyed by bombs alone. If it is not entirely a military threat, then it cannot effectively be met by military means only. You can kill a human being, but you cannot kill a belief and ideology has no borders; therefore, it cannot be contained. Even if the U.S. and its allies were able to kill every single ISIS fighter, there would be others that would attempt to carry out that ideology or a new group would emerge. Therefore, containment alone will not meet President Barak Obama’s strategy of “degrade and destroy” ISIS.³ A “containment-plus” strategy is needed to push ISIS out of Iraq, contain in Syria, and deter recruitment and support.

I.

The Cold War generated from differing views about the shape of the post-war world. The U.S. was determined on spreading its vision of freedom and free trade, while the Soviet Union was concerned about security and demanded bordering neighbors who were politically sympathetic in preserving its own sovereignty.⁴ The U.S. emerged from World War II as a world superpower and sought to capitalize on this power to create a world order to sustain American

interests.⁵ The U.S. wanted to spread ideological values of liberty, democracy, and equality and assumed that it could provide the stability that the post-war world needed. However, it failed to recognize that what they assumed were universal values may not be capable of a 'plug-and-play' model that would thrive in other parts of the world.⁶ At the same time, the Soviet Union aimed to rebuild and restructure its borders to prevent another German invasion. It also aimed to spread ideological values of class struggle, success of the public and to extend the tradition of a strong centralized government.⁷ The U.S. had originally believed that the Soviets would cooperate, as they had against the Germans during the war. However, this trust began to atrophy and the U.S. began equating Soviet to Nazi systems. There was already a lingering fear that the U.S. had not acted quickly enough against Adolf Hitler's totalitarianism, causing Americans to be even more skeptical and fearful for a repeat from Soviet leader, Joseph Stalin.⁸ As U.S.-Soviet relations deteriorated, both sides began to prepare for war. By 1946 Stalin declared that capitalism would be torn apart and communism would succeed.⁹ In one of the most famous speeches of the Cold War period, former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill condemned the Soviet Union's policies and declared "an iron curtain has descended across the continent" and urged for a containment policy against the Soviets.¹⁰ Churchill's speech is considered one of the declarations of the beginning of the Cold War.

Containment soon formed the basis of American foreign policy. George Kennan was primarily responsible for defining this containment policy. He argued that Soviet hostility stemmed from their view of world affairs that resulted in their insecurities. Kennan stated that a policy towards the Soviet Union must be that of "a long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies."¹¹ Containment justified the hardline stance, military and economic, that the U.S. chose.

However, George Kennan never intended his telegram to be a prescription for policy. Left up to the interpretation of government officials, an exclusive military option to contain the Soviets was pursued instead of using more diplomatic and economic methods. Even Kennan later stated that this “misunderstanding” led to forty years of an unnecessary and expensive process during the Cold War and that he did not see the Soviets as a primary military threat.¹² His actual goal had been to withdraw all the U.S. forces from Europe to provide the Soviets reassurance against hostilities towards them and thus tempering their degree of expansion that they felt necessary to exercise.¹³ The thesis of Kennan's long telegram was basically that American policy toward the Soviet Union during and after World War II had been wrong. Kennan argued that the source of Russian insecurity wasn't external, it was internal. Indeed, "Kremlin leaders were too unsophisticated to know how to govern by any means other than repression," and thus "picturing the outside world as 'evil, hostile, and menacing'" was a boost to Soviet legitimacy.¹⁴ Kennan instead suggested a strategy of "patience and firmness" in dealing with the Soviets, one that openly recognized disputes with the Soviet Union and maintained "a calculated relationship of resources to objectives," which prompted the development of a containment policy.¹⁵

What if the U.S. had followed Kennan's actual intent? Would it have made a difference? At the time of Kennan's telegram, in 1946, the U.S. had just come out of another World War. So, why choose another military option to contain the Soviets? I would argue that it is because the U.S. didn't understand how to battle an ideological threat by any other means. I would even go so far as to argue that this is still true today.

Kennan, himself, did not see the ideological writings of Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin as a reliable guide with which to anticipate Soviet behavior. In 1947 he wrote “ideology is a product and not a determinant of social and political reality...its bearing is on coloration of

background, on form of expression, and on method of execution, rather than on basic aim.”¹⁶

Ideology, then, was not justification for action that was already decided upon. Therefore, the objective of containment was to limit Soviet expansionism and that communism only posed a threat if it was an instrument of that expansion.¹⁷ However, as William Inboden argues, the Cold War was in many ways a religious war. The U.S. believed that human rights and freedoms were endowed by God and it was the United States’ destiny to be the defenders of liberty in the world. This theology was used to gain domestic support for Cold War measures and an attempt to unite all faiths against communism, which was atheistic.¹⁸

For four decades the U.S. tried to contain the spread of communism all over the world, to include fighting wars in Korea and Vietnam as well as aiding Afghanistan in fighting against the Soviets.



The Cold War’s effects on domestic affairs led to the creation of several internal loyalty programs to eradicate any signs of communist support within the United States. Maps, such as the one shown here, was used to depict communism as an infectious disease that needed to be contained and to cause fear.¹⁹

The expansion of communism was as much of a threat for the United States during the Cold War as Islamic extremism has become over the last fourteen years. If we were to examine Islam in the same framework that Kennan used for the Soviets, there would be many parallels. First, Islam is a totalitarian ideology at war with Western capitalism. In 1956 Bernard Lewis wrote an article for *International Affairs* titled *Communism and Islam*. He argued that religious leaders of Islam are very different from the Communist Party, but both groups profess a “totalitarian doctrine.” They are alike only in their resolution, inclusiveness, and their “eternal questioning of Western man.”²⁰ Second, Islamists are patient and prepared to fight the long war.

As we have seen in fourteen years of war in Afghanistan and Iraq, Islamic extremists truly believe in what they are fighting for and are determined to ‘win’ (whatever winning may be) no matter how long it takes. Ideological concepts are enduring; therefore, they can afford to be patient. Third, groups like ISIS may be resistant to logic of reason, but they are vulnerable to force. They fear that recognizing the claims of anyone else, especially Westerners, invalidates their own.²¹ However, groups like ISIS are formed by three things: people, ideas, and equipment. Attritional bombing by the use of airpower has been able to reduce a lot of the tangible stuff and even kill many ISIS fighters, but defeating them will need to directly address the people and ideas. An ideology cannot be bombed out of existence.²² Finally, like the Soviets, Islamic extremists like ISIS are always on the move and try to take advantage of any opportunities available to them to spread their sphere of influence and ideology. ISIS’s ultimate goal is to establish a global Islamic State and it will not stop until all land is conquered for Allah.²³ ISIS has been able to gain territory in Iraq and Syria and are determined to expand into surrounding areas.

II.

So how did a group like ISIS emerge in the first place? It goes back much further than the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003. In 1916 France and Britain entered an agreement, known as the Sykes-Picot agreement, which divided the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire into British and French territories.²⁴ Provinces of Mosul, Baghdad, and Basra, once separated by ethnicity, were grouped into the new state of Iraq, a word that ironically means “well-rooted country.”²⁵ The consequences are apparent today. Many Arabs view the Sykes-Picot agreement as the beginning of a sequence of betrayals by the West.²⁶



ISIS breaks through the Iraq-Syria border as symbolic of breaking the Sykes-Picot agreement

The lack of interest in establishing sensible borders resulted in the rivalry between Shiites and Sunnis and even more complicated by the presence of the Kurds. The chaos that ensued eventually led to the rise of dictator, Saddam Hussein.²⁷ Like the Soviets, “it became necessary to justify the retention of the dictatorship by stressing the menace of capitalism abroad.”²⁸ This external focus kept the masses afraid and therefore more easily controlled. Again, like the Soviets, Iraqi leadership had insecurities and until security could be achieved, happiness of the people was of little importance.²⁹

The emergence of ISIS may be viewed as symptomatic of the political chaos reigning in Iraq and Syria, which has intensified ethnic divides and questions the sense of belonging to a national community. It may also be considered a reflection of the identity crisis in the region as a whole. Arab nationalism resulted in autocratic governance of the people in support of the “struggle against the invaders.” ISIS has resorted to the same ‘struggle’ in the name of Allah.³⁰ The ‘struggle’ against the invaders has been motivation for various identity formations, but failure of these identities to flourish has created a “perpetual identity crisis.”³¹ In essence, it has created a negative identity. Rather than these groups stating who they are as a people, they state what they are not and what (or who) they are against...the West.

For decades people in Arab states lived under regimes that ruled by fear. However, over the past several years we’ve seen Arab people aggressively struggling to find their national identity. We’ve seen them willing to risk their lives for openness and democracy. Arab and Western nations have vast cultural differences, but beyond these differences there are universal aspirations for dignity and for a government that will respect the will of the people.³² The most peaceful and successful of the Arab uprisings was in Tunisia in 2011, while it seems the other Arab Spring countries have turned into chaos and civil conflict.³³ ISIS, too, has tried to create

this idea of citizenship, community, and human security that have all proven to be very attractive to people who feel their identity has been lost. Security and sense of belonging motivate people. For ISIS, the conflict has become a central part of its identity and to give up the fight would be to give up a part of itself as a community.³⁴

The former Soviets and now Islamists offer their followers the sensation of belonging to a community of believers. They also offer a feeling of mission and purpose that will inevitably lead to victory over the non-believers.³⁵ Traditionally, Islam divides the world into two opposing groups: the House of Islam and the House of War. The House of Islam includes territories controlled by Muslims and the House of War is all other territories controlled by non-Muslims.³⁶ This, too, has parallels to the Soviets' view of world affairs. The content of belief is different, but the radicalism of the believer is much the same and against the same Western enemy. The jihadist Islamists that have developed over the last one hundred years believe, like Samuel Huntington wrote in his 1993 article *The Clash of Civilizations?*, that there will be fundamental conflict between Islam and the West.³⁷ The believers against the non-believers, until the non-believers no longer exist.

The ideological writings of Karl Marx, Vladimir Lenin, and Joseph Stalin would have helped the U.S. understand Soviet intentions and possibly avoid an arms race with them. Instead, it seems the U.S. played into the hands of the Soviets and nearly exhausted itself militarily and economically. The U.S. tends to focus on adversary capabilities more than intentions, possibly because capabilities are more concrete. However, like President Dwight Eisenhower stated at a press conference in 1953 "anyone who doesn't recognize that the great struggle of our time is an ideological one,...is not looking this question squarely in the face."³⁸ This same statement could

be made about ISIS today. If we understand the ideology, we have a better understanding of the intentions. ISIS wants a war with the West, and we are essentially giving them what they want.

In this aspect, ISIS is already winning. I would also argue that they have already won in several other ways as well. It has achieved victory in Northern Iraq and Eastern Syria and does meet the minimum requirements for statehood.³⁹ From a military perspective, the fact that they control adjacent terrain in Northern Iraq and some of Eastern Syria gives them landpower. Dominance on the ground enables ISIS to have a solid base of support. An interview with the head of Iraqi Kurdish intelligence, said he believes that ISIS "generates something equivalent to \$6 million a day by the selling of oil, wheat, taking taxes from people, ransoms, and still getting donations."⁴⁰ Estimates of ISIS fighters in the region run as high as 40,000, and they have a support base (some out of fear, some out of genuine support) of approximately 100,000 people.⁴¹ They also operate in somewhat of a vacuum. There is no local state or non-state actor that has the ability to deny ISIS this landpower; not the Government of Iraq, Syria, nor the Syrian opposition. Their territory occupation and brutal tactics have destabilized the region of Iraq and Syria. The Assad regime has lost control of the majority of the territory of the Syrian state while the government of Iraq has lost control of majority-Sunni provinces.⁴² ISIS has become "the strongest tribe."⁴³ There also hasn't been much international intervention other than airstrikes. The U.S. public and international community is apathetic to interventions in Iraq, and other areas of the world. One reason is that there is fear and risk associated with military intervention, that it will create global backlash and fuel ISIS's determination and aid in additional recruitment. The U.S. policy of "no boots on the ground" and, what some have referred to as, "strategic restraint" are possible ways in which the U.S. is attempting to mitigate this risk. ISIS is prepared to fight the long fight. The only military force that the U.S. has considered sending into Northern Iraq

from a ground standpoint is from the Special Operations community, which are too small to defeat ISIS in a short timeframe. This is why the U.S., and international community, must be just as patient and prepared to fight this long battle as ISIS is.

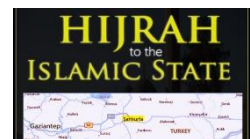
III.

So, what is so attractive about ISIS? As previously stated, they do appeal to a sense of mission, purpose, and identity. They also use religious duty as a way to persuade potential recruits, primarily other Muslims.⁴⁴ If they already have a bond in faith, then it is easier to attract recruits into believing that they are doing something righteous in the name of their religion and in the name of Allah (or God). In fact, the political idea of Islam is about community (*ummah*), which is the idea that all Muslims, wherever they reside in the world, are bound together through their faith and allegiance to Allah.⁴⁵ ISIS also uses its success as tools for recruitment.⁴⁶ As of February 2015, there is an estimated 20,000 foreign fighters fighting with ISIS. They are from 90 different countries, and 3,400 of them from Western states.⁴⁷ ISIS has welcomed all Muslims—believers—as equals. Also, ISIS’s leadership is made up of several foreigners, so no one is going to be discriminated against philosophically for being foreign.⁴⁸

To gain legitimacy and public support, ISIS is using a strategy for the “Facebook age.” They use state-of-the-art videos and social media to recruit fighters, intimidate potential adversaries, and promote and spread their ideology.⁴⁹ ISIS has reportedly been linked to more than 6,600 twitter accounts, more than 2,000 email addresses, and approximately 100 IP/VPN channels.⁵⁰ The tactics that ISIS has used suggests that it is led by brutal thugs, but in fact it is led by a purposeful command team that is employing violence in sophisticated ways to achieve its ultimate aim of an Islamic State. Its leadership has been instrumental in uniting ISIS’s message and vision. ISIS’s success has allowed it to become a world-renown terrorist

organization. Its marketing campaign has been suave and sophisticated enough that even New York's top advertising agencies would hire them. Even using the acronym ISIS is part of their branding technique. News reporters often refer to issues concerning the terrorist group as the "ISIS crisis," making it easier to recall and therefore, making them a more well-known organization. The U.S. has tried to deny ISIS legitimacy as a state actor, which can be seen in the many versions of what to call it (ISIL, ISIS, Islamic State, Daesh). However, it has been unsuccessful in part due to the appeal of the branding that ISIS has done for itself.⁵¹

ISIS also offers a sense of adventure to potential recruits. Most recently it has published a 50-page e-book for would-be recruits titled *Hijrah to the Islamic State*. It provides tips like any other travel guide, to include what to pack and the best way to travel.⁵² ISIS has also managed to glamorize the terrorist lifestyle. In the U.S. there is cultural reinforcement of having to do something difficult in order to cross the threshold from child to adulthood. For males, and even females today, going to war is that something difficult.⁵³ Going to war is seen as something noble and honorable. Even Hollywood has glamorized what war looks like. For teenagers and young adults that are trying to find their place in the world, this glamorization makes the military and groups like ISIS more appealing. Since September 11, 2001 there have been only fourteen films that portray the enemy as Islamist. However, there have been ninety-seven films that portray Americans, Russians or some other terrorist group as the bad guy.⁵⁴ Even though these movies are a work of fiction, their influence, along with sophisticated propaganda that ISIS uses reaches young, restless Muslims and other supporters around the world to join a cause they see worth fighting for. The rewards of reality lose to the lures of fantasy.



IV.

President Obama's military objectives with respect to ISIS are to "degrade and ultimately destroy" the organization.⁵⁵ To accomplish these objectives, he proposed to use the military to conduct airstrikes, provide support to ground forces in Iraq and train and equip Kurds and Syrian rebels, continue counter-terrorism measures (i.e. counter ideology and cut funding), and provide humanitarian assistance to individually displaced persons.⁵⁶ Counter value bombing—denying ISIS oil revenue—will work towards achieving “degrade,” but will almost certainly not “destroy.” It goes back to those three things mentioned previously: people, ideas, and equipment. The U.S., its allies, and regional partners must convince the people to walk away from ISIS. This is not an easy task when their skies are being darkened by bombing runs. This will require non-kinetic means to target ISIS’s message and ultimately prove it worthless.⁵⁷

President Obama’s September 10, 2014 speech included language that the U.S. strategy would also include efforts to counter ISIS's "warped ideology." More specifically, “It is America that has the capacity and the will to mobilize the world against terrorists.”⁵⁸ So a key part of U.S. strategy is informational. If the U.S. is committed to destroying ISIS, part of this informational campaign will need to demonstrate that ISIS is weak. As stated, it is vulnerable to force. Therefore, we need what Charles Krauthammer calls a “containment-plus” policy to drive ISIS out of Iraq and contain in Syria.⁵⁹ In Iraq, the U.S. and its allies have ground support and fighters that have the numbers and will to push ISIS out.⁶⁰ The efforts in Iraq are progressing slowly and little by little, as ground troops prepare to take back Mosul and Anbar—two of ISIS’s strongholds.⁶¹ If the U.S. and its allies demonstrate strength and push ISIS out of Iraq, it will no longer be “the strongest tribe.” Once driven out of Iraq, this leaves containment in Syria.

Unfortunately, in Syria there are no ground troops in support of airstrikes, making it harder to force ISIS out.⁶²

Much like George Kennan analyzed of the Soviets, ISIS is facing more internal than external conflict right now. We are already seeing signs of internal conflicts between ISIS fighters due to a failure to unify people under the caliphate, which is a key part of ISIS ideology.⁶³ The more of what the public sees of ISIS's failures and signs of weakness, will ultimately make it harder to recruit new fighters and eventually crumble to its own demise.

Containment-plus will also need to include more than dispelling from Iraq and containing in Syria. It must also include dedicated diplomacy with other states in the region as well as a viable domestic initiative that will deter U.S. citizens from supporting and/or joining the fight with ISIS. Once ISIS is contained by military means, the U.S. should withdraw its forces from the region. If diplomacy works, regional partners will help contain ISIS from expanding and—using Kennan's analysis—maybe if ISIS no longer feels a U.S. [Western] threat against them, they will no longer feel the need to exercise expansion. However, this would also prove that ISIS's motive is more about revenge than about the ideology of a global Islamic State that it claims to be honoring. The U.S. must also, again, be careful about how we withdraw from the region. If we partner with the wrong anti-ISIS supporters, we may risk having to fight a future battle against ISIS's successor or other extremist group. Having the same goal of defeating ISIS does not mean having the same overall interests. We must keep this in mind if we are committed to winning this fight.

In 2011, the White House released the first national strategy to help prevent violent extremism domestically. Its premise is to strengthen community partnerships between government, law enforcement, private sector, and academia to help bring awareness to and

ultimately prevent violent extremism from occurring.⁶⁴ This effort has helped build awareness and empower community efforts to disrupt potential individuals from engaging in radicalization activities. However, the program has only been tested in three cities: Boston, Los Angeles, and the Twin Cities. Whereas, the initiative has good intentions, it has not stopped U.S. citizens from supporting or joining ISIS. For the program to work it will need to broaden to all U.S. states and specifically focus on youth programs. The majority of those that choose to join the extremist group range in ages sixteen to twenty-five and are typically from Muslim families.⁶⁵ This points to a Muslim identity crisis within the U.S. that must be addressed. It is possible that by defining the enemy as Islamist after September 11, 2001, the U.S. created a Muslim identity crisis within its own borders.

There's a Swahili proverb that states "you can't turn the wind, so turn the sail."⁶⁶ We can't change what has already happened, but we can make a difference for the future. It will take efforts to 'turn the sail' within the Muslim community as well as Americans outside the Muslim community to effectively counter violent extremism. If Muslims do not have a feeling of acceptance and belonging in the U.S., they will seek out groups like ISIS that are offering it to them. If the U.S. can overcome the Muslim identity crisis it will aid in a strong Muslim opposition. If ISIS faces a strong Muslim opposition from not only the West, but even locally, it will begin to prove ISIS worthless.

CONCLUSION

In 1946 George Kennan analyzed the Soviets in a way that Islam can be analyzed today. Many of the behaviors and beliefs of the Soviets are prevalent in the Islamic extremist group, ISIS today. However, this does not mean that they are the same or should be addressed in the

same way. Communism is not a religion, while Islam is. Islam as a religion is no more anti-capitalist than anti-Communist. Yet, both are ideologies and ideologies do not die on battlefields. The U.S. spent four decades fighting the Soviets to stop the spread of communism; forty years that even Kennan said to be unnecessary. It has now spent the last fourteen years fighting Islamic extremists around the world. There were successes in Afghanistan and Iraq, but the current threat of ISIS has proven that the ideology hasn't been defeated.

The U.S. has once again opted for a containment strategy, with aims of “degrade and destroy” ISIS in Iraq and contain in Syria. If ISIS is forced out of Iraq, it will degrade the organization, but most certainly not destroy it. Containing in Syria still allows for the ideology to exist. Ideologies have no borders, therefore cannot be contained. However, by degrading ISIS it will be seen as too weak to prevail and achieve its ultimate goal of an Islamic State. If it is weak, then it is no longer appealing to those who wish to support or join the organization.

Simultaneously, efforts will need to be enhanced on a domestic level to address violent extremism and the Muslim identity crisis. During the Cold War, domestic programs were aimed at weeding out supporters of communism. Today, similar initiatives have been taken to bring awareness to signs of radicalization and prevent criminal activity, but it's not enough. It will take all Americans—Muslims and non-Muslims—to, once again, come together as one community as they did after the attacks on September 11, 2001. Providing that sense of community and belonging to all Americans will ultimately deter would-be recruits to groups like ISIS.

All of these efforts will take time and maybe not in an acceptable timeframe for the American public. But, the war does not end just because we decide we no longer want to fight it. It ends when we win. We can win against ISIS. We may not destroy the ideology, but we can prove it worthless. It will just take the courage and will to do it.

NOTES

(All notes appear in shortened form. For full details, see the appropriate entry in the bibliography.)

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